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May 12, 2006

The Honorable Robin Carnahan  
Secretary of State  
State Capitol, Room 208  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Secretary Carnahan:

This comes in response to your May 11, 2006 letter articulating your concerns about Senate Bill No. 1014 (SB 1014), which creates a photo identification (ID) requirement in order to cast a ballot at a voter's assigned polling place.

SB 1014 contains a number of valuable provisions, including provisions for the courts to postpone elections in case of natural disasters or emergencies. This is a very important provision, especially in the wake of the severe weather that struck Pemiscot County in April and disrupted the city election in Caruthersville. SB 1014 also codifies important uniform voting and counting standards into law. Importantly, it codifies uniform procedures for the verification and counting of provisional ballots, as well as providing additional provisions to combat voter fraud and voter registration fraud.

I believe that criticisms of the photo ID requirement are exaggerated. The photo ID requirement enjoys wide bipartisan support nationally. The Commission on Federal Election Reform, co-chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker, endorsed photo ID requirements. The provisions in SB 1014 closely mirror the Commission's recommendations, including allowing those who do not have a valid photo ID to cast a provisional ballot.

SB 1014 also contains provisions that will remove impediments to obtaining photo IDs. For those who need photo IDs for voting purposes and cannot afford them, the state will pay. The Department of Revenue will implement an aggressive program to provide photo IDs for voting purposes.

Furthermore, there are additional protections for disabled and elderly voters who do not have photo ID by allowing them to vote a provisional ballot and having their identities established by signature. Moreover, for the 2006 elections, SB 1014 allows voters without a photo ID to establish their identity by affidavit and cast a provisional ballot.

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I disagree with your assertion that the problem in Missouri's 2000 general election was not significant voter fraud. To the contrary, I conducted an investigation in 2001 that showed significant voter fraud in St. Louis City and St. Louis County. Subsequent criminal proceedings confirm that fraud is still a problem in St. Louis that must continue to be monitored. Photo ID will help to combat fraud.

Additionally, the tougher identification requirements I secured in 2002 contributed to the record voter turnout our state experienced in both the August and November 2004 elections. The changes we implemented helped improve Missourians confidence in the process. I believe that SB 1014 will further enhance that confidence

I hope that this addresses your concerns. Please contact me should you require assistance in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Blunt". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Matt" and last name "Blunt" clearly visible, followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Matt Blunt